



U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Huntsville Center

## FACT SHEET

May 2001

# Ordnance and Explosives

## Formerly Used Defense Sites

### Background

In 1986, Congress established the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) under Public Laws 99-190 and 99-499. Under the program are two subprograms, the Installation Restoration Program - which deals with active defense sites - and the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program. Under DERP, the Defense Department's goal is to remediate environmental problems on present and formerly owned or used sites.

The Formerly Used Defense Sites Program includes the following projects:

- Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste
- Containerized (CON)/HTRW
- Potentially Responsible Party (PRP)
- Building Demolition and Debris Removal (BD/DR)
- Ordnance and Explosives (OE)

Huntsville Center is designated as a Design Center and Mandatory Center of Expertise for OE. Several other Corps Districts are designated as Removal Districts for OE and may perform the last phase of OE projects.



*A typical piece of old ordnance.*

### Center of Expertise

The Huntsville Center became the Center of Expertise for Ordnance and Explosives (OE) for the entire U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on April 5, 1990.

A team of engineers and other specialists from Huntsville studies sites throughout the country to determine if ordnance contamination exists. In cooperation with local Corps of Engineers districts, public officials and interested citizens, regulators, landowners, and other stakeholders, the center examines possible contamination, determines its potential danger, develops a plan to remove the ordnance, and oversees the execution of that plan. The local geographic district serves as the project manager for the investigation and cleanup, and handles the public involvement responsibilities. Headquarters,

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C., oversees the entire program and provides approval and funding.

Huntsville Center's goal is to reduce, in a timely, cost-effective manner, the risk to human health, safety and the environment resulting from past DoD activities. The Center applies rigid safety standards and uses contractor personnel highly qualified in unexploded ordnance removal. All Center personnel who oversee safety have specialized military training and extensive specialized experience in OE removal.

## Site Cleanup

The Corps executes site cleanup in phases.

**Archives Search Report.** This report consists of interviews with local residents and former employees of the former defense activity, searches through old records and historical documents, and a visit to the site. If the archives search confirms an ordnance problem, the Corps proceeds to the next phase - the site investigation.

**Study Phase.** The Corps conducts surface sweeps in suspect areas to try to visibly detect ordnance. Then magnetometers (very precise metal detectors) are used to see what ordnance might be buried under the soil surface. A confirmation of ordnance during the site investigation may lead to interim removals to address immediate safety hazards. For non-emergency removals of ordnance, the Corps prepares an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA). The EE/CA further defines the hazard by establishing the area, depth and density of ordnance contamination.

The EE/CA is prepared and reviewed in accordance with the national Contingency Plan of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, better known as Superfund.

### **Removal Design/Removal Action.**

The Corps explores different ways for disposing of the ordnance and selects the best disposal method after reviews by the appropriate environmental agencies, owners and the public. Once the decision has been made on the method of disposal, the actual removal design and removal action phases begin.

## Potential OE Sites

**1,600 Formerly Used Defense Sites**

**1,400 sites required preliminary investigation - Archives Search Report (ASR)**

**1,000 ASRs completed**

**600-700 sites expected to be contaminated with unexploded ordnance**



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